



Connecticut Business & Industry Association

**Testimony of Jesmin K. Basanti
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Before the Committee on Higher Education & Employment Advancement
Hartford, Connecticut
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H.B. 5368 An Act Concerning No Worker Left Behind

Good Afternoon Senator Handley and Representative Willis and other members of the Committee. My name is Jesmin Basanti and I am a Staff Attorney for the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (hereinafter "CBIA"). CBIA represents approximately 10,000 member companies in virtually every industry. They range from large, global corporations to small, family owned businesses. The vast majority of our member companies have fewer than 50 employees.

CBIA supports HB 5368's goal to encourage students to enter high demand, and emerging industry by giving them a tuition break for two years of their post-secondary education. Many CBIA members are manufacturers and small businesses that are concerned about a shortage of skilled workers to fill new positions and replace retiring employees. Our state has been facing a diminishing population due to an increasing number of young people leaving the state and are therefore, looking at the possibility of not being able to fill jobs in the years to come.

We understand that the state is in a dire fiscal situation and that the means to pay for this incentive are limited. If it can be done without burdening the state or its taxpayers further it will be a benefit to all that receive it. This program will encourage education in new sectors and hopefully give these students more incentive to stay in Connecticut once they graduate because their will be a good paying job for them here. Keeping young people in Connecticut is important to businesses and **HB 5368** would be a good step in that direction.

Thank you for granting me the opportunity to testify today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.